

The Wilson Practice

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Health leaders today issue an urgent plea to communities amid a “perfect storm” of rising pressure on services and rocketing COVID-19 rates.

It comes as demand on services and the volume of 999 calls continues to soar as teams continue to do all they can to ensure patient receive safe, high-quality care. Latest figures show:

- Almost every hospital bed across Hampshire and Isle of Wight is full
- More than 650 people with COVID-19 are being cared for in hospitals across the area – more than 2.5 times higher than in early January during the peak of winter
- More than 2,800 staff working for local NHS organisations are off sick – with almost half of sickness absences due to COVID-19

The NHS is always there for anyone who needs help, but these combined pressures mean it is crucial that more is done to help frontline teams working round-the-clock to continue to provide safe care to patients across Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Due to significant and sustained pressures, health leaders are having to make some very difficult decisions to prioritise patients who are most in need of emergency care. This means that:

- People arriving at the Emergency Department (ED) who don't need emergency care will be redirected to other, more appropriate services to ensure patients experiencing life threatening emergencies or illness are cared for in a timely way
- Patients will be discharged from hospital when they have received all of the acute care they need – even if they continue to test positive for COVID-19
- Relatives and carers are asked to ensure their loved one can be discharged quickly to help free up beds for those who need them
- They are also asked to support loved ones with their ongoing care needs in the short term, once they have been discharged from hospital

Other asks include:

- staying in contact with the ward they are on so everyone is clear about and prepared for the expected date of discharge
- supporting arrangements to provide suitable clothing and shoes for the person being discharged
- helping with transporting patients home. If you can help take a relative, friend or neighbour home when they are ready to leave hospital it helps them get home more quickly

This action is being taken because people working in the NHS across the board in Hampshire and Isle of Wight – at GP surgeries, NHS 111, ED, mental health services, ambulance and community services - face greater pressures than at any point since the first peak of the pandemic.

Dr Derek Sandeman, Chief Medical Officer for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Integrated Care System, said: “People working across health and care in Hampshire and Isle of Wight continue to go above and beyond the call of duty to give their patients safe care.

“With staff sickness rates well above average, rising cases of COVID-19 and very high numbers of people needing treatment, we face a perfect storm – but there are some very specific ways in which people can help the frontline NHS and care teams.

“If you have a loved one who is in hospital, please help staff to help get them home quickly when they are well enough – even if they are still testing positive for COVID. That is enormously important to help us make beds available for those in greatest need.

“Our Emergency Departments are for those in greatest need – if you aren’t quite sure what help you need, please contact 111.nhs.uk to get the right help for you.”

More information on which service to use and when is available [here](#). This includes mental health care and dentistry as well as urgent treatment centres.

If you need urgent care but it is not a life-threatening emergency, call 111 or visit [111 online](#) and you will be directed to the right service for your needs.